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QUESTION OF EQUITABLE REPRESENTATION ON AND INCREASE IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Report of the Secretary-General

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EGYPT

[Original: Arabic]

[23 February 1994]

[The following communication was transmitted by the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations on behalf of the Arab States.]

1. The steady increase in the responsibilities currently being assumed by the United Nations highlights the importance of establishing the principle of equal rights and duties among States in respect of the exercise of authority by the various organs of the United Nations, so as to ensure the interests of all Member States, achieve justice and guarantee legitimacy.

2. Over the past few years, the nature of international relations has changed radically. Consequently, the composition of the Security Council must reflect such developments and the accompanying change in the nature of the challenges facing the United Nations.

3. The Arab States believe that it is vital for the United Nations to move with the growing trend aimed at using action in the regional context as an indispensable contribution to the shaping of future international political relations.

4. The Arab States also affirm the need to readjust the ratio between the number of Security Council members and the total number of Members of the United Nations, which has been disturbed as a result of the recent large increase in the membership of the Organization, and to achieve an equitable distribution of Security Council seats among the various geographical regions with a view to securing the effective participation of each group in the decision-making process in the Council, which would have positive effects on the strengthening of international peace and security.

5. In the light of the above, the Arab States urge the necessity of ensuring that their representation on the Security Council is proportionate to the number of Arab States among the total membership of the United Nations, bearing in mind that the Arab States share historical and cultural links.

LIECHTENSTEIN

[Original: English]

[24 February 1994]

1. Liechtenstein notes with satisfaction that in the recent past the Security Council has achieved increased effectiveness in carrying out its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security conferred upon it by Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations.

2. Since the adoption of the amendments to Articles 23 and 27 of the Charter in 1963, the number of States Members of the United Nations has increased substantially. A discussion on the question of equitable representation on the Security Council therefore seems to be timely. In the view of the Government of Liechtenstein, it is important for the credibility and the effectiveness of the United Nations that the international community considers itself equitably represented on the Security Council. A thorough discussion of the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council should, therefore, be conducted before decisions on this question are taken. A lasting and fruitful solution can only be found on the basis of a genuine consensus.

3. The Government of Liechtenstein is of the opinion that the following criteria should be considered in the discussion that has been initiated:

(a) While it seems timely and appropriate to review the membership of the Security Council, its effectiveness should be maintained and increased so that this body retains its ability to deal with international crises. A limited enlargement of the Council therefore seems appropriate. It is equally important to ensure that any expansion of the Security Council also meets the concerns and interests of small States. If new members are chosen, their election should be undertaken on the basis of Article 23, paragraph 1, of the Charter.

(b) Given the increasingly informal nature of the work of the Security Council, there is a clear need for enhancing its transparency. This would include efforts by the Council to consult more actively with non-member States of the Council involved in questions under consideration by this body and the involvement of countries contributing to peace-keeping operations in the decision-making process of the Security Council. Moreover, contact with States that are not members of the Council should be intensified in the light of Article 25 of the Charter.